The Mental Mechanism of "Emotional Intelligence": Philosophical Foundations and Practical Significance

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Fractal Academy
Issue 5 (Autumn 2026), Article 3
Series: "Mental Mechanisms of the Communicative-Cognitive Framework of Personality: Structure, Foundations, and Pedagogy of Development"
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DOI: [to be assigned]
Publication date: 1.11.2026

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Annotation

In this article I disclose in detail such a mental mechanism as emotional intelligence, which is an integral part of the communicative-cognitive framework of the personality. Drawing on the works of ancient philosophers (Plato, Aristotle), thinkers of the Modern era (Descartes, Spinoza, Pascal, Kant), as well as on contemporary research in the field of the psychology of emotions and pedagogy, I substantiate the thesis that emotional intelligence is not simply an additional skill, but a fundamental ability allowing a person to understand himself and others, to manage his emotions and to build effective relationships. I pay special attention to the fact that the development of emotional intelligence is a necessary condition for the creation of a psychologically safe educational environment, the prevention of conflicts and the professional burnout of teachers.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, mental mechanisms, philosophy of emotions, psychology of emotions, empathy, self-regulation, CCFP.

The Heart That Knows

In the modern world, where digitalization, information overload and the intensification of communications impose new demands on the person, emotional intelligence becomes not simply a desirable quality, but a necessary condition of a successful life and professional activity. As researchers note, the development of emotional intelligence becomes not simply an additional skill, but a key resource for ensuring psychological well-being and effective communication between the participants of the educational process [11].

In my model of the communicative-cognitive framework of the personality, emotional intelligence occupies a special place. It is closely connected with other mental mechanisms: with eloquence and conciseness - the ability to express feelings through words; with the construction of cause-and-effect relationships - the understanding of the causes of one's own and others' emotions; with constructive argument - the ability to manage emotions in conflict situations; with non-verbal communication and charisma - the recognition of emotions by body language. Without developed emotional intelligence all the other mechanisms remain incomplete [14].

Before turning to the philosophical foundations, I must explicitly designate the place of this mechanism in my model. In the CCFP system, emotional intelligence is MM-3, and it belongs to the core [14; 15]. The distinction between core and support was introduced in the article on the structure of mental mechanisms [14] and substantiated in the article on epistemological recursion [15]. The core is six mechanisms that constitute the act of solving a difficult problem: MM-1, MM-3, MM-5, MM-6, MM-10, MM-11. Support is five mechanisms without which the core does not work, but which do not constitute the act of solution: MM-2, MM-4, MM-7, MM-8, MM-9. Emotional intelligence belongs to the core, because without it the act of solving a difficult problem is logically incomplete: a researcher who has no access to his own experience as data cannot work with the first-person perspective, and without this the hard problem of consciousness remains insoluble [15]. That is precisely why MM-3 is core, and not support. Emotional intelligence is not an "additional option" to thinking. It is the organ with which we grasp what is not grasped by logic.

Two Lines That Did Not Intersect

The history of the study of the interconnection of emotions and intellect has its roots in ancient philosophy. Plato, reasoning about the connection of emotions and intellect, distinguished three types of feelings: feelings of the bodily

nature; feelings in which both body and soul participate; feelings formed within the soul itself [1]. At the same time Plato spoke in favor of moderation in the expression of emotions and insisted on awareness, control and the rule of reason over the destructive influence of emotions [1]. At the origins of the development of the problem stood also Aristotle, who examined emotions in the context of ethics and rhetoric, emphasizing their role in persuasion and in the formation of virtues [2].

In the era of the Modern age the main views on the interconnection of emotions and intellect were reflected in two philosophical directions - the empirical, where the sensory sphere dominates as the source of knowledge, and the rationalist, where reason is the source of cognition and the criterion of its truth. The English philosopher, the founder of empiricism F. Bacon considered that cognition is nothing other than the perception and reflection of the external world in human consciousness, beginning with sensory sensations. True induction, according to Bacon, by means of the sensory gradually rises to the awareness of general propositions and regularities.

R. Descartes, the French rationalist philosopher, represents emotional processes as those through which the union of spirit with body and with surrounding reality occurs. The thinker ascribes great significance to affects and at the same time concerns himself with their curbing by reason. According to Descartes, only feelings controlled by reason are useful and must serve for the good of man. Descartes emphasized: rule your feelings so that they do not rule you [4]. The Dutch rationalist philosopher B. Spinoza considered that man cognizes the necessary connection of things, thereby becoming free and rational, only by freeing himself from the affects that are the cause of the slavish unfreedom of thoughts and actions. According to Spinoza, behavior must be directed by reason, knowledge and principles, that is, must be rational. Spinoza opposed sensory representations and understanding: sensory knowledge is the lowest kind of knowledge, whereas reliable knowledge is possible only at the stage of understanding and reason [5].

Here it is appropriate to recall the old metaphor of the charioteer. Plato compared the soul to a chariot, where reason is the charioteer and the feelings are the horses. If the horses are unbroken, the chariot will be smashed. But if the charioteer pulls the reins too tight, the horses will stop. The art is not in choosing between reason and feeling, but in finding the harness between them. Emotional intelligence is precisely the art of such a harness.

Pascal's Breakthrough

The first of the scholars who expressed doubt about the boundaries of scientificity, noting at the same time that the reasons of the heart, different from the reasons of reason, are far more important than the latter, was the French mathematician, physicist and philosopher B. Pascal. According to Pascal, it is not reason but the heart that is the organ of intuition, the basis for the activity of reason [3]. The heart does not oppose reason, but helps it; it is the humanistic foundation of reason on which reason always relies. The sensory comprehension of the world and of truth is a way of the development of self-consciousness [3]. Pascal's deep and original conception anticipates the irrational-existential line of humanism in philosophy.

The German philosopher I. Kant overcomes the gap between empiricism and rationalism. Cognition, according to Kant, can be regarded only as a synthesis of sensibility and understanding: sensations without concepts are blind, and concepts without sensations are empty [6]. In the middle of the 19th century classical philosophy was replaced by the philosophy of life, and irrationalist conceptions came to the forefront of philosophical thought. The representatives of the philosophy of life (A. Bergson, W. Dilthey, G. Simmel) define reality through the experience of life itself, as lived experience, outside which experience does not exist, and perceive life experience as irrational and not reducible to reason. In personalism the main attention is directed to the personality. The life of the personality begins with the fact that it must enter into itself, concentrate on the sensation and understanding of itself. The main way of the self-affirmation of the personality, according to the French philosopher E. Mounier, is inner self-perfection. Emphasizing the importance of self-knowledge, the scholar considered the meaning of life to be the comprehension of the other. Only through emotions between people and in the interconnection of the individuals I and Thou is the essence of the personality revealed, self-knowledge occurs, and the development of the emotional intelligence of the person becomes possible.

From Philosophy to Science

The concept of emotional intelligence was first introduced into scientific circulation by the American psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990. They defined it as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to

distinguish them and to use the information obtained to guide thinking and actions [7]. Salovey and Mayer distinguished four groups of competencies that emotional intelligence encompasses: the ability to perceive, appraise and express emotions accurately; the ability to access and generate emotions when they facilitate cognition; the ability to understand emotional messages and to use emotional information; the ability to regulate one's emotions to promote growth and well-being [7].

The further popularization of the concept was carried out by Daniel Goleman, who presented emotional intelligence as a key factor of success in professional and personal life. Unlike the narrowly psychological approach of Salovey and Mayer, Goleman's model is applied in character and includes such components as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills [8]. Goleman asserted that emotional intelligence may be even more important than the traditional intelligence quotient for achieving success in life. This assertion, although it provoked dispute, drew attention to the importance of the emotional sphere in education and professional training [8].

Contemporary researchers distinguish three main approaches to the study of emotional intelligence [10]. The ability model regards it as a cognitive ability to process emotional information (Salovey, Mayer, 1997) [7]. Emotional-social intelligence places the accent on social and emotional skills (Bar-On, 2006). The model of emotional competencies is an applied model including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman, 1998) [8]. In Russian psychology the concept of emotional intelligence has been actively developed since the early 2000s (E.P. Ilyin, I.N. Andreeva, D.V. Lyusin, O.V. Kholodnaya and others). Russian researchers regard it as an integrative quality of the personality including cognitive, emotional-regulative and communicative components. Thus, D.V. Lyusin defines emotional intelligence as the ability to understand and manage emotions - one's own and those of other people, emphasizing its connection with empathy and reflection [9].

Three Constituents

On the basis of the analysis of philosophical and psychological approaches, researchers distinguish three interconnected components of emotional intelligence [10]. The cognitive component - knowledge and identification of emotions, understanding of their causes and consequences. The affective component - empathy, the capacity for compassion, and the management of emotional states. The behavioral component - the constructive expression of emotions and the building of relationships. These components form a single system, where the development of one contributes to the development of the others. As is noted in a study, a high level of emotional intelligence is a critically important factor for the creation of a psychologically safe and supportive educational environment. It contributes to the prevention of the professional burnout of teachers, to the reduction of the level of conflict in educational collectives and to the raising of the academic motivation of learners [11].

Contemporary research confirms that emotional intelligence is a most important factor of the professional formation of the teacher, of the development of personal resilience and of the raising of the quality of educational interaction [12]. As research shows, cooperative learning in pedagogical education can contribute to the development of 21st-century skills - collaboration, creativity, interest, involvement and self-regulation - in future teachers [12]. A study conducted at Ulyanovsk State Pedagogical University describes a unique model of the organization of the psychological-pedagogical conditions for the development of emotional intelligence in older adolescents, emphasizing that pedagogical support, carried out in various forms and methods, can become an effective means of developing emotional intelligence [11].

Connections Without Which the Mechanism Does Not Work

Emotional intelligence is closely connected with the other mechanisms of the CCFP [14]. With eloquence and conciseness - the ability to express one's feelings through words, to select precise formulations for describing emotional states. With the construction of cause-and-effect relationships - the understanding of the causes of one's own and others' emotions, the ability to analyze what led to a particular emotional state. With constructive argument - the ability to manage emotions in conflict situations, not to resort to personal attacks, and to preserve respect for the opponent. With non-verbal communication and charisma - the recognition of emotions by body language, facial expressions, and intonations, and the ability to use non-verbal signals for effective communication. Emotional intelligence is not a separate muscle, but a joint that connects different movements.

How to Develop It

The development of emotional intelligence is impossible without the creation of a psychologically safe educational environment where the student is not afraid to express his feelings, to ask questions and to make mistakes. As Sh.A. Amonashvili notes, sincere interest in and respect for the child are the driving force of upbringing. Without this condition any exercises for the development of emotional intelligence will be useless. The first step toward the development of emotional intelligence is to teach the child to recognize his emotions and to name them. Research shows that emotional intelligence is disclosed through a number of key factors. The primary of them is the skill of reflection and adequate expression: the ability not only to become aware of one's own affective states, but also to verbalize them in accordance with the context of the situation, which is closely coupled with developed empathy [13].

Empathy - the ability to understand the feelings of other people - is developed through the discussion of literary characters, the analysis of situations from life, and role-playing games. As was noted in a study on the development of soft skills through literature, literature contributes to the development of emotional intelligence through the discussion of characters and their motives [17]. An important constituent of emotional intelligence is the ability to manage one's emotions. This can be taught through exercises in mindfulness, breathing techniques, and the analysis of one's reactions in various situations. The second component of emotional intelligence according to the model of Salovey and Mayer - the regulative one - is responsible for the voluntary control over the intensity and direction of both one's own and others' emotional reactions [7].

The development of emotional intelligence requires a rich emotional vocabulary. A study conducted in *Frontiers in Psychology* showed that there exists a progressive increase in emotional vocabulary, with more complex emotions introduced at advanced levels. The authors proposed a systematic model of instruction that addresses key components of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, social skills and emotional regulation [12]. For the purposeful development of emotional intelligence, psychology as a separate school subject is necessary. As I showed in the article on new subjects [18], psychology teaches not only to understand oneself and others, but also to manage one's emotions and to build healthy relationships. It makes conscious those skills that in other subjects are developed intuitively.

How to Measure Progress

In accordance with the principle of dynamic diagnostics, which I substantiate in the article on the diagnostics of mental mechanisms [16], the assessment of the development of emotional intelligence must be not static, but procedural. What is assessed: the precision of the recognition of emotions - can the student name a concrete emotion, and not a general "bad" or "good"; empathy - does the student understand the feelings of others, does he offer support; self-regulation - does the student propose ways of coping with emotions; emotional vocabulary - how rich is the stock of words for describing emotional states. How to track dynamics: record how many different emotions the student can name and describe; note how precisely the student determines the causes of his own and others' emotions; compare how the student reacts to conflict situations at different periods of time, whether his reaction becomes more constructive; assess how far the student is able to adapt his emotional behavior to the context.

An example of a diagnostic task: imagine that your friend has lost his favorite toy. What does he feel? How did you understand this? What would you say to him? Now imagine that you yourself have lost something important. What do you feel? How can you cope with this feeling? What is assessed is the precision of naming emotions, empathy and the ability to propose ways of self-regulation. For the collection and analysis of data on the development of emotional intelligence, artificial intelligence can be used - for tracking dynamics, identifying patterns and proposing individual recommendations [16].

The Foundation of Human Interaction

Emotional intelligence is not simply an additional skill that can be developed at will. It is a fundamental ability of the person allowing him to understand himself and others, to manage his emotions, to build relationships and to cooperate. As the history of philosophical thought shows, from antiquity to modernity, people have always been aware of the importance of the interaction of reason and feelings [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6]. In my CCFP model emotional intelligence occupies a central place, since it binds together all the other mental mechanisms. Without the ability to understand one's own and others' emotions, neither eloquence, nor constructive argument, nor effective forecasting

is possible. Only by developing emotional intelligence can we bring up a person capable not only of thinking, but also of feeling, not only of analyzing, but also of sympathizing, not only of achieving goals, but also of building relationships [14]. The heart that knows is not a metaphor. It is an exact description of what makes us human.

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Conflict of Interest
The author declares no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article.

Funding
The research was conducted without external funding.

Data Availability Statement
The data discussed in the article are contained in the text of the publication. Additional materials can be requested from the author.

Author Contributions
Aleksandr Kleymenov - concept, research, text writing, final editing.

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